

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the careful consideration of this application. Claims 1-4, and 8-27 are currently pending. Independent claims 14 and 27 have been amended.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to claims 14 and 27 do not raise any new issues. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter this amendment, and reconsider all outstanding rejections.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3 and 5-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,533,145 to Shofner et al. Claim 1 is the independent claim. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 recites that:

the opto-electronic system compris[es] two or more partial camera modules . . . each partial camera module *consisting essentially of* an objective in combination with a sensor, wherein further camera components are located remotely from said partial camera modules.

Contrary to the Examiner's remarks in the Office Action, Shofner does not disclose "two or more *partial* camera modules" with "each partial camera module *consisting essentially of* an objective in combination with a sensor" as claimed. In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that "[t]he term 'consisting essentially of' . . . merely means that the partial camera module 'comprises' an objective in combination with a sensor among other things" The Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's interpretation of the phrase "consisting essentially of" is

incorrect.

Under the proper interpretation, the transitional phrase “consisting essentially of” limits the scope of a claim [or claim element] to the specified materials or steps “and those that do not *materially* affect the *basic* and *novel* characteristic(s)” of the claimed invention. See M.P.E.P. § 2111.03 (emphasis in original), citing *In re Herz*, 537 F.2d 549, 551-52 (CCPA 1976). Shofner does not disclose “two or more *partial* camera modules” with “each partial camera module *consisting essentially of* an objective in combination with a sensor.” Rather, the optical imaging units 130, 132 of Shofner are *complete* cameras including a CCD camera, multiple lenses, a mirror 160, and a spatial mask 156. (See Shofner, col. 7, lines 34-37; col. 8, lines 29-35.) The Applicants submit that the additional components of the *complete* cameras of Shofner, such as the mirror 160 and the spatial mask 156, would materially affect the basic and novel characteristics of the claimed invention, for example, by increasing the amount of space required by each “partial camera module,” and also by increasing the cost of each “partial camera module.” Accordingly, Shofner does not anticipate claim 1. Furthermore, Shofner does not provide any motivation to replace the complete imaging units 130, 132 of Shofner with the claimed *partial* camera modules, because Shofner is not concerned with reducing the space occupied by the optical imaging units, or with reducing the cost of the imaging units. For the above reasons, Applicants submit that claim 1, and its dependent claims, are allowable over Shofner.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 4 and 14-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shofner. Claims 4 and 15-26 depend from claim 1, which, as demonstrated above, is patentable over Shofner. Claims 4 and 15-26 are patentable over Shofner for the same reasons as claim 1, as well as for reciting additional features.

Claim 14 is the independent claim. Claim 14 has been amended to recite a similar feature to claim 1, and particularly that:

the opto-electronic system comprises two or more partial camera modules located side by side across the width of the fibre material, and additional camera components located remotely from the partial camera modules, with each partial camera module consisting essentially of an objective in combination with a sensor

As demonstrated above with respect to claim 1, Shofner does not disclose or suggest “two or more *partial* camera modules . . . with each partial camera module *consisting essentially of* an objective in combination with a sensor.” Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14 is patentable over Shofner.

Claim 27 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Shofner in view of German Patent Document DE 196 24 905 A1 to Lubenow et al. Claim 27 has been amended to recite a similar feature to claim 1, and particularly that “each opto-electric sensor consists essentially of an objective in combination with a sensor.” As demonstrated above with respect to claim 1, Shofner does not disclose or suggest such an arrangement. Furthermore, Lubenow does not provide the missing disclosure of Shofner. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit

that claim 27 is patentable over Shofner in combination with Lubenow.

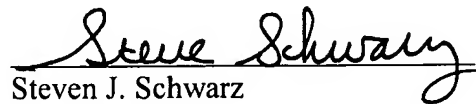
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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